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ROSALIND AT RED GATE

BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS COPYRIGHT, 1907, BY BOBBY-BEAR PUBLISHING CO.

SYNOPSIS.

Miss Patricia Holbrook and Miss Helen Holbrook, her niece, were entrusted to the care of Laurence Donovan, a writer, summering near Port Annandale. Miss Patricia confided to Donovan that she feared her brother Henry, who, ruined by a bank failure, had constantly threatened her for money from his father's will, of which Miss Patricia was guardian. They came to Port Annandale to escape Henry, Donovan sympathized with the two women. He learned of Miss Helen's annoying aunt, Donovan discovered and captured an intruder, who proved to be Reginald Gillespie, suitor for the hand of Miss Helen Holbrook.

CHAPTER III.—Continued. Gillespie lay on his back, wrapped in my dressing-gown, his knees raised, his bandaged arms folded across his chest. Since bringing him into the house I had studied him carefully and, I must confess, with increasing mystification. He was splendidly put up, the best-muscled man I had ever seen who was not a professional athlete. His forearms and clean-shaven face were brown from prolonged tanning by the sun, but otherwise his skin was the pink and white of a healthy baby. His short light hair was combed smoothly away from a broad forehead; his blue eyes were perfectly steady—they even invited and held scrutiny; when he was not speaking he closed his lips tightly.

I half believed the fellow to be amusing himself at my expense; but he met my eyes calmly. If I had not caught a lunatic I had certainly captured an odd specimen of humanity. He was the picture of wholesome living and sound health; but he talked like a fool. The idea of a young woman like Helen Holbrook giving two thoughts to a silly youngster like this was preposterous, and my heart hardened against him.

"You are flippant, Mr. Gillespie, and my errand with you is serious. There are places in this house where I could lock you up, and you would never see your button factory again. You seem to have had some education."

"The word does me great honor, Donovan. They chuckled me from Yale in my junior year. Why, you may ask? Well, it happened this way: You know Rooney, the Bellefontaine Cyclone? He struck New Haven with a vaudeville outfit, giving exhibitions, poking the bag and that sort of fake. At every town they invited the local sports to dig up their brightest amateur middle-weight and put him against the Cyclone for five rounds. I brushed my hair the wrong way for a disguise and went against him."

"And got smashed for your trouble, I hope," I interrupted.

"No. The boys in the gallery cheered so that they fussed him, and he thought I was fruit. We shook hands, and he turned his head to snarl at the applause, and, seeing an opening, I smashed him a hot clip in the chin, and he tumbled backward and broke the ring rope. I vaulted the orchestra and bolted, and when the boys finally found me I was over near Waterbury under a barn. Eli wouldn't stand for it, and back I went to the button factory; and here I am, sir, by the grace of God, an ignorant man."

"How did you find your way here, Gillespie?" I demanded.

"I suppose I ought to explain that," he replied. I waited while he reflected for a moment. He seemed to be quite serious, and his brows wrinkled as he pondered.

"I guessed it about half and for the rest, I followed the heaven-kissing stack of trunks."

He glanced at me quickly, as though anxious to see how I received his words.

"Have you seen anything of Henry Holbrook in your travels? Be careful now; I want the truth."

"I certainly have not. I hope you don't think—" Gillespie hesitated.

"It's not a matter for thinking or guessing; I've got to know."

"On my honor I have not seen him, and I have no idea where he is."

I had thrown myself into a chair beside the couch and lighted my pipe. My captivité troubled me. It seemed odd that he had found the abiding place of the two women; and if he had succeeded so quickly, why might not Henry Holbrook have equal luck?

"You probably know this trouble-some brother well," I ventured.

"Yes; as well as a man of my age can know an older man. My father's place at Stamford adjoined the Holbrook estate. Henry and Arthur Holbrook married sisters; both women died long ago, I believe; but the brothers had a business row and went to smash. Arthur embezzled, forged, and so on, and took to the altitudinous timber, and Henry has been busy ever since trying to pluck his sister."

"ruined by his own brother, deprived of his inheritance by his sister and abandoned by his only child. There wasn't much to Arthur Holbrook; Henry was the genius, but after the consultations of rum. He and Henry married the Hartridge twins who were the reigning Baltimore belles in the early '80's—so runneth the chronicle. But I gossip, my dear, sir; I gossip, which is against my principles. Even the humble button king of Strawberry Hill must draw the line."



"I Suppose I Ought to Explain That."

When Ijima brought in a plate of sandwiches he took one gingerly in his swathed hand, regarded it with cool inquiry, and as he munched it, remarked upon sandwiches in general as though they were botanical specimens that were usually discussed and analyzed in a scientific spirit.

"The sandwich," he began, "not happily expresses one of the saddest traits of our American life. I need hardly refer to our deplorable national habit of hiding our shame under a blithe and misleading exterior. Chicken sandwiches in some parts of the world are rather coarsely marked, for purposes of identification, with pinfeathers. You may covet no nobler fame than that of creator of the Flying Sandwich of Annandale. Yet the feathered sandwich, though more picturesque, points rather too directly to the strutting lords of the barnyard. A sandwich that is decorated like a fall bonnet, that suggests, we will say, the milliner's window—or the plumed knights of sounding war—"

With a little sigh, a slow relaxation of muscles, Mr. Gillespie slept. I locked the door, put out the lights, and tumbled into my own bed as the chapel clock chimed two. In the disturbed affairs of the night the blinds had not been drawn, and I woke to find the room flooded with light and my prisoner gone. The doors were locked as I had left them. Mr. Gillespie had departed by the window, dropping from a little balcony to the terrace beneath. I rang for Ijima and sent him to the pier; and before I had finished shaving the boy was back, and reported Gillespie's boat still at the pier, but one of the canoes missing. It was clear that in the sorry plight of his arms Gillespie had preferred paddling to rowing. Beneath my watch on the writing table I found a sheet of note-paper on which was scrawled:

Dear Old Man: I am having one of those nightmare's mentioned in our delightful conversation. I feel that I am about to walk in my sleep. As my flames are a trifle bluggy, pardon loss of your dressing-gown. Yours, R. G.

P. S.—I am willing to pay for the glass and medical attention; but I want a rebate for that third sandwich. It really tickled too harshly as it went down. Very likely this accounts for my somnambulism.

When I had dressed and had my coffee I locked my old portfolio and tossed it into the bottom of my trunk. Something told me that for a while, at least, I should have other occupation than contributing to the literature of Russian geography.

CHAPTER IV.

I Explore Tipicane Creek.

My first care was to find the garden of St. Agatha's and renew his pledge of silence of the night before; and then I sought the ladies, to make sure that they had not been disturbed by my collision with Gillespie. Miss Pat and Helen were in Sister Theresa's pretty sitting room, through whose windows the morning wind blew fresh and cool.

"This is a day for the open! You must certainly venture forth!" I began, cheerily. "You see, Father Stoddard chose well; this is the most peaceful place on the map. Let us begin with a drive at six, when the sun is low; or, maybe, you would prefer a little run in the launch."

They exchanged glances. "I think it would be all right, Aunt Pat," said Helen.

"Perhaps we should wait another day. We must take no chances; the

on the launch, and, hearing a step on the pier planking, he glanced up, then rose and asked the stranger his business.

The man shook his head. "If you have business it must be at the house; the road is in the other direction," and Ijima pointed to the wood, but the stranger remained stubbornly on the edge of the pier. I now stepped out of the wood and walked down to the pier.

"What do you want here?" I demanded, sharply. The man touched his hat, smiled, and shook his head. The broad hand he lifted in salute was that of a laborer, and his brown back was tattooed. He belonged, I judged, to one of the dark Mediterranean races, and I tried him in Italian.

"These are private grounds; you will do well to leave here very quickly," I said.

I saw his eyes light as I spoke the words slowly and distinctly, but he waited until I had finished, then shook his head.

I was sure he had understood, but as I addressed him again, ordering him from the premises, he continued to shake his head and grin foolishly. Then I pointed toward the road.

"Go; you will be best for you not to come here again!" I said, and, after saluting, he walked slowly away into the wood, with a sort of dogged insolence in his slightly swaying gait. At a nod from me Ijima stole after him while I waited, and in a few minutes the boy came back and reported that the man had passed the house and left the grounds by the carriage entrance, turning toward Annandale.

With my mind on Gillespie I put off in the launch, determined to study the lake geography. I have, I hope, a soul for landscape, and the soft bubble of water, the lush reeds in the shallows, the rapidly moving panorama of field and forest, the glimpses of wild flowers, and the arched blue above, were restful to mind and heart. It seemed shameful that the whole world was not about; then, as I reflected that another boat in these tranquil waters would be an impertinence that I should resent, I was aware that I had been thinking of Helen Holbrook all the while; and the thought of this irritated me so that I criticised Ijima most unjustly for running the launch close to a boulder that rose like a miniature Gibraltar near the shadowy shore we were skirting.

We gained the ultimate line of the lower lake, and followed the shore in search of its outlet, pleasantly set down on the map as Tipicane creek, which ran off and joined somewhere a river of like name. The lake's waters ran away, like a truant child, through a woody cleft, and in a moment we were as clean quit of the lake as though it did not exist. After a few rods the creek began to twist and turn as though with the intention of making the voyager earn his way. In the narrow channel the beat of our engine rang from the shores rebukingly, and soon, as a punishment for disturbing the peace of the little stream, we grounded on a sand-bar.

"This seems to be the head of navigation, Ijima. I believe this creek was made for canoes, not battle-ships."

Between us we got the launch off, and I landed on a convenient log and crawled up the bank to observe the country. I followed a stake-and-rider fence, half hidden in vines of various sorts, and tramped along the bank, with the creek still singing its tortuous way below at my right hand. Soon the rail fence gave way to barbed wire; the path broadened and the underbrush was neatly cut away. Within lay a small vegetable garden, carefully tilled; and farther on I saw a dark green cottage almost shut in by beeches. The path dipped sharply down and away from the cottage, and a moment later I had lost sight of it; but below, at the edge of the creek, stood a long houseboat with an extended platform or deck on the water-side.

I can still feel, as I recall the day and hour, the utter peace of the scene when first I came upon that secluded spot: The melodious flow of the creek beneath; the flutter of homing wings; even the hum of insects in the sweet, thymy air. Then a step farther and I came to a gate which opened on a flight of steps that led to the house beneath; and through the intervening tangle I saw a man sprawled at ease in a steamer chair on the deck, his arms under his head. As I watched him he sighed and turned restlessly, and I caught a glimpse of close-trimmed beard and short, thin, slightly gray hair.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Supposed Relic of St. Peter. It is announced that a remarkably interesting discovery has been made in the catacombs of Priscilla at Rome in the form of the following inscription: "In isto loco Petrus fuit." Signor Marucchi, the eminent archaeologist, is convinced, after careful study of circumstances, that the Petrus is none other than the Apostle St. Peter.

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